THE VANITY OF THE CREATURE.

By the AUTHOR OF THE Whole Duty of Man, &c.

Together with a LETTER Prefix'd, ſent to the Bookſeller, relating to the AUTHOR.

ECCLES. 1. 2.
Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity.

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TO THE

Bookſeller.

Mr. Kidgell,

YOu having Printed that moſt Excellent piece, Entituled, The Whole Duty of Man, Part II. Wherein the Author of that Book hath diſcovered much Judgment, together with a compoſure of Elegancy of Style and Expreſſion, I having a good opinion of your Converſation by a little acquaintance with you, at the requeſt of my Kinſman Mr. G. L. I. ſend you an account of the little Tract you are Printing, called The Vanity of the Creature, which was, (if my word may paſs for it) written by the firſt Author of The Whole Duty of Man. That he

was a perſon of great Learning and Piety, I think no man will gain-ſay; which if he did, he would be ſufficiently confuted by that his moſt Excellent and Divine Treatiſe. He was alſo of that Chriſtian-like temper of meekneſs and modeſty, rarely to be found in the beſt of men of theſe flagitious times, that out of a perfect enmity and averſion to vain-glory, he purpoſely concealed his name; which hath been the occaſion of as many conjectures (almoſt) to know who he was, as there have been ſcrutinies to find out the head-ſpring and original ſource of the River Nile. *For my part, I ſhall not (though I could) break the rules of Decency and good Manners, to ſatisfie the itching deſire of the over-curious, in divulging that which the Author himſelf was ſo careful to conceal.* ——Cum vides velatam, quid inquiris in rem abſconditam? *This is certain, and I will adventure at the boldneſs to ſay, that all thoſe ſeveral Diſcourſes which have appeared abroad in the World under*

der our Authors name, were not written by him; but whoever were the Authors, it cannot be denyed, but that they have written them with the greateſt Judgment, Learning, and Piety imaginable, and that they are only worthy of imitating ſo great a Divine as our Author.

Yours in all Civil Offices,

J. L.

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Vanity of the Creature.

THE Creatures Vanity and Mutability is ſo great, that it ſhould be the greateſt incentive to us to look to the Supream good, as the only Center of our Happineſs and Felicity. Since the *Summum bonum* of Man lies in ſomething more ſublime and excellent than any Created Being, it's not in vain for him, in order to attaining the true object of his real Happineſs, to take a Contemplative view of the Creatures vanity, which is moſt perſpicuouſly demonſtrable even in Monarchies, which *Bodin* tells us, are more durable than Popular States, becauſe leſs ſubject to be divided, (Unity being the great Preſerver of all things:) and yet have theſe had, as the Moon, not only their

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increaſe and full light, but alſo their wain and changes, and this ſometimes in a moment. That as in Muſick you ſhall hear ſometimes a ſtring tun'd up to its *ultimum potentiæ*, as high as it will bear, and preſently depreſſed again to the loweſt Key, and another elevated, yet both of them breathing but light Airs, and of ſhort continuance: So may you ſee a Monarchy now wound up to the higheſt pitch of Happineſs, and by and by let down again into the loweſt depths of miſery. This is Gods doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.

And here I ſhall begin with thoſe Empires and Monarchies that were moſt famous among the reſt.

For how ſoon was the *Aſſyrian* or *Babylonian* Monarchy ſwallow'd up by the *Perſian*, the *Perſian* by the *Greek* or *Macedonian* Empire, and the *Greek* by the *Roman*? which the Prophet *Daniel* preſents unto us, by the Gold, Silver, Braſs, and Iron, whereof *Nebuchadnezzar's* Image conſiſted, *Dan.* 2. 32. The diſſo-

diſſolution of one, as in natural things, ſo here, being ſtill the generation of another; and again, the erection of the later being the deſtruction of the former.

And as for the *Roman* Monarchy, their own Hiſtorian can tell us of that, how it had both its Infancy, Youth, Manhood, and Old age, as it were by turns: As its Infancy under Kings, its Youth under Conſuls, its Manhood from the firſt *Punick* War unto the time of *Auguſtus Cæſar*, and from that time its Old age under the ſucceeding Emperours; until at length that ſolid Body was torn aſunder by the ſtrugglings of her own Children; into the Eaſtern and Weſtern Empires, whereof the former was ſoon eaten out by the *Turks* and *Saracens*, and the later alſo fell away much, after a little revolution of time, by the falling off of divers Nations from her, each of which after they had pluck'd off their own feathers from the *Roman* Eagle, left her almoſt naked; As the *Franks* and *Burgundians*

in *France*, the *Goths* in *Spain*, the *Normans* and *Lombards* in *Italy*, together with the *Engliſh* and *Scots* in *Britain*: until at the laſt caſt the *Roman* Monarchy began a little to recal her ſelf into *Germany*, where ſhe hath held up ſince little more than the bare name of the Empire. So that Viciſſitude you ſee is the great Empreſs of the world, unto whoſe unſtay'd Dominion all earthly Powers and Principalities muſt be ſubject, even thoſe that are of the firſt Magnitude, much more others that move in a lower Orb.

And of theſe I ſhall ſingle out only three, which I conceive moſt eminent, to be inſtanced in for this point.

The firſt is *Judea*, whoſe Government was Monarchically ſetled by God himſelf; yet how oft did ſhe change her Lords and Maſters, yielding her ſelf as it were ſucceſſively firſt to the *Babylonian*, and after that to the *Roman*, *Perſian*, *Saracen*, *Chriſtian*, *Ægyptian*, and now to the *Turkiſh* power? That as the

the Poet ſpake of *Troy*, *Fuit Ilium*; ſo may we of *Jeruſalem*, her *Metropolis*, *Fuit Hieroſolyma*, that *Jeruſalem* was; She *was great among the Nations*, or *Domina Gentium*, *the Lady of the Nations*, but now, *Non ſic ut olim*, it hath not been with her for theſe many Generations paſt, *as in former days*, (to uſe *Job's* words in his twenty ninth Chapter, ſecond and third verſes) *when God preſerved her, when his Candle ſhined upon her head, and when by that light ſhe walked through darkneſs*; but *Servants have ruled over her, and there was none to deliver her out of their hands.* Which is a good Lecture of Mutability to other Kingdoms and their Mother-cities. For *Jeruſalem* was once a holy and happy City, and had been happy ſtill, had ſhe but continued holy; but that failing, *How is her Gold become dim, how is her fine Gold chang'd into Droſs!* as ſhe complains her ſelf.

The ſecond Example I produce here is *Naples*, which we may well call the

Ball of Providence: And indeed ſo it was, being bandied from one Lord to another ten ſeveral times, before it came to lie (as now it doth) at the foot of *Spain*. For being a Countrey at firſt diverſly peopled, it was upon the diviſion allotted to the Eaſtern Emperours, but from them forc'd by the *Almains*, and ſo to the *Greeks* and *Saracens*, and then ſucceſſively hurried about to the *Normans*, *Germans*, *French*, *Hungarians*, *Arragonoys*, and from them to the *French* again; till in the end the *Spaniard* ſeized upon it: and whether it will continue long with him or no, is very uncertain; eſpecially if we remember how of late years a poor Fiſherman (*Maſſinello* by name) ſnatch'd up the Reins of Government from him, and (had not God otherwiſe determined of that Kingdom, by infatuating that Muſhrome-King) for ought we know, he might have run quite away with them; ſo ſlippery are all earthly Kingdoms!

3. But

3. But not to look out any longer to other Nations of *Chriſtendom*, (methinks) we may inſtance this beſt by reflecting upon our ſelves. For you all know (I ſuppoſe) how the *Romans*, *Saxons*, *Danes*, and *Normans*, had each of them their ſeveral and alternate days of Lordſhip over this Nation; but yet becauſe they did not know in thoſe their days the things that belonged unto their Peace, how do we ſee the ſhadows of the night ſtretched out upon them, their Suns ſet with us, and their days ſhut in!

The longeſt day we read of, was that in *Joſhuah*'s time, wherein though the Sun ſtood ſtill in *Gibeon* for the ſpace of a whole day, yet ſet it did at laſt.

The day of the *Romans* was long upon our Horizon, for the Sun of their proſperity ſhone here for the ſpace of four hundred years and more; yet did it then go down as to us in this Nation, and Darkneſs here now doth lie upon it.

Again, the day of the *Saxons* continued five hundred years and upwards; That of the *Danes* two hundred fifty five years, or thereabouts.

And how long the day of the *Normans* hath laſted, every petty Almanack can tell us. I, and if none of thoſe Suns come to riſe again within our Hemiſphere, (when the ſins of this Nation are ripe, and call for Gods ſickle to cut them down) it's beſide his ordinary rule, which uſually runs out all Humane things by a changeable circumference; for ſo *Solomon* tells us in his Book of *Eccleſiaſtes*, *That the Sun riſes, and the Sun goes down, and haſteth to the place where he aroſe.*

Neither is this all, that the Powers and Principalities on earth are upon a daily turn, but as the *Primum Mobile* (you know) carries about the other Spheres; ſo do theſe carry about many other changes and alterations with them: As that of Religion, Laws, Liberties, Sciences, Cuſtoms, and ſuch like.

Nay,

Nay, even the Houſes of God, which before to violate, was held a Crime inexpiable, yet are they now upon ſuch removes broken down without ſcruple; and the very Urns of the Dead, which have been always look'd upon as Sacred Cabinets to preſerve the Bodies of Gods Saints in for Eternity, yet are they now broken up, and their Aſhes thrown about, (ſuch is the unſetledneſs of all things here below) even as the vileſt Duſt upon the face of the earth.

Beloved, it hath been ever thus upon the converſion of ſuch great Bodies, and it is ſo ſtill: for never was there any converſion in this Land like to that our eyes have ſeen of late; That if any one ſhould have ſlept but ſome few years laſt paſt (as the Ancients fain of *Epimenides*) and ſhould have awaked again in theſe times, how would he wonder at thoſe ſtrange *Metamorphoſes* that are now among us, there being *Nova rerum facies*, A new face of things both in Church and State! Inſomuch,

(as

(as Mr. *Harding* ſpake ſometimes of *Rome*, That he did *quærere Romam in Roma*, That he did ſeek *Rome* in *Rome*, and could not find it,) ſo may we ſay now, That we may *quærere Angliam in Anglia*, That we may now ſeek for old *England* in our new *England*, and yet go without it, it is ſo much changed from what it was before.

And as we have ſeen much of this already, ſo who knows but we may come to ſee a great deal more hereafter? Since we know not what a Day may bring forth.

Secondly, Neither is this true only in Empires and Monarchies, but alſo in Cities and their popular Governments. *Etiam ſummis negatum eſt urbibus ſtare diu*, ſays the Moraliſt. And to this purpoſe tends that of the Author to the *Hebrews*, Heb. 13. 14. *We have here no abiding City, but we look for one to come, whoſe foundation is in the heavens.*

There is then no City on earth, nor any kind of Government in it that ever

ver ſtood up long in one poſture, none that ever was, or ſhall be abiding. *Paſs ye up to* Calneh *and ſee*, ſays the Prophet, *Amos* 6. 2. *and from hence go to* Hemath *the Great*, *and ſo to* Gath *of the* Philiſtins. So, paſs ye up to *Athens* the eye of *Greece* for Knowledge and humane Literature, and ſee; and from thence go to *Rome*, the Head of the Weſtern Empire, and ſo come to *Florence*, the Beauty of *Italy*; (for I forbear to name more, Examples in this kind being almoſt infinite) in all which you may read this truth at large.

And firſt for *Athens*: How many changes of Governours and Governments did ſhe endure? putting her ſelf off from Hereditary Kings to Archons, or Ariſtocratical Lords, who govern'd firſt for term of life, then decennially; and after theſe, to Democratical Rulers.

Next for *Rome*; how oft hath that City been alter'd by *Gauls*, *Hunnes*, *Goths* and *Vandals*?

Yea

Yea, how oft hath the Government of it been pass'd away from one hand to another?

It is mystically represented to us, *Rev.* 17.3. by the beast of seven heads, which is there interpreted by the seven Hills it is built upon, to be *Rome*: And according to the number of those Hills, to so many Masters did it submit it self, who had their several turns of supreme power and regiment over her; as *Kings*, *Consuls*, *Dictators*, *Decemviri*, *Tribunes*, *Emperours*, and *Popes*: under the last of which, I do not find that it was ever Besieged by any that took it not: such strange ebbings hath that Sea had experience of!

Last of all for *Florence*. It is strange to tell what various whirlings about that hath had in point of Supreme Rule and power. For at first the Nobility ruled it in an Aristocratical way. But a little after, some Grandees among the people wrested it to themselves; who being tired out with continual quarrellings

lings one with another, (for the people were divided into three ranks) the middle ſort of them took upon them the management of the State. And theſe alſo falling quickly together by the ears, the third and loweſt ſort became Maſters of it. Which holding not long, by reaſon of their mutual diſcords, they yield themſelves and the Government of their City unto *Charles* of *France*, Brother to *Lewis* the Ninth; who within a ſhort time being invited to the Kingdom of *Naples*, and leaving only Deputies at *Florence*, the *Florentines* return to their Popular Government, and renew their Civil Wars among themſelves. For redreſs whereof, they ſend for the Duke of *Athens*, and give up all to him. But ſhortly they ſuppoſing themſelves to be brought in bondage, and to be deſpoiled of their Liberty by the fear of his Guard, baniſh him the City, and within leſs than one years ſpace ſhake off his Government over them. After which they

they come to an Aristocracie again, devising new Names and Officers for their Magistrates, and changing and rechanging them so oft, that sometimes their State was no better order'd, than if it had been committed to Mad men, or Children without discretion, the City scarce twenty years together keeping the same form of State: but as sick men in Feavers (says *Bodinus*) desire to be removed now hither, and by and by thither, or from one bed to another, as if the Disease were in the places where they lay, and not in the intrals of their own Bodies; so were the *Florentines* still turning their State, till they turn'd it into the hands of the *Medices*, who now hold it. A thing almost incredible, (says he) did not their own Recorder leave it recorded to posterity.

But in the second place let us descend to Families or Races of men that are lineally successive for Name and Greatness.

And

And here let me ask, where are those Illustrious Families cried up so much in former times, and famous in their Generations?

As the Couragious Family of the *Maccabees* in *Jewry*, and of the *Ptolemies* in *Ægypt*.

Again, where is the *Zelzuccian* Family in the less *Asia*, and the Imperial Family of the *Palæologi* in *Greece*?

That of the *Merovignians* in *France*? Of the *Plantagenets* in *England*, with many more of this rank I might name, did not the narrow compass of so small a Treatise bound me?

Tell me, is not the Name and Greatness of these Families long since expired, the Roots and Branches of them quite remov'd, and others planted in their rooms? Examples of this sort are innumerable, as *Elihu* says in *Job*: *He breaks in pieces mighty men without number*; (so mighty Families without number) *and sets up others in their stead.*

And

And as for ſuch Families as are of a lower form, we need not go far, ſince our own knowledge here will lead us to continual changes and alterations.

For thou haſt ſeen it may be many Families heretofore in this Nation, brim-full of earthly happineſs, and running over; and now upon thy ſecond view of them, behold there is no ſuch thing, but they are much alter'd, and running very low in the world, if not clean run out.

So that proſperity (you ſee) was never yet ſo entail'd upon any Family, and the Heirs thereof, but within a little time ſome one or other hath cut it off.

But laſt of all, if we look upon particular perſons, this will appear moſt evident; but eſpecially if we conſider them three ways. In reſpect of their Bodies, Minds, and Eſtates.

Gregory Nazianzen hath an excellent ſaying of the two former joyntly conſider'd,

ſider'd, which is this; Ἡμεῖς τε γὰρ οἱ σωμάτων μόνον ἄλλοις καὶ ἀντίθετοι, καὶ ἑαυτοῖς, καὶ ἡμῶν αὐτῶν οὐδὲ ἐπὶ μιᾶς ἡμέρας οἱ αὐτοὶ κατὰ τε σῶμα μόνον τε, ἀλλὰ καὶ σώματος, καὶ ψυχῆς ἀεὶ ῥέοντες τε καὶ μεταπίπτοντες. *i. e.* We are not mixt Creatures only, but alſo contrary both to others and our ſelves: not continuing truly the ſame, no not ſo much as one day; but both in regard of our Bodies and Minds, perpetually flowing and perpetually changing.

And we can inſtance this in all the ſtages of our life, wherein by the ordinary courſe of Nature, we are firſt weak, and then ſtrong, and after weak again. As in our Childhood, we are then weak both in Body and Mind: in our Youth, ſtrong in Body and weak in Mind; and in our Manhood, ſtrong in both; but in our Old age, ſtrong in Mind and weak in Body; and in our Decrepit, weak again in both, as we were in our Childhood at the firſt.

But to leave this general conſideration of them, and to look upon them now more diſtinctly and ſeverally by

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themſelves. And firſt for the change of particular Perſons in regard of their Bodies.

And here it is true of them, what *Seneca* affirms, *viz.* That *no man is the ſame to day, he was yeſterday: Ego ipſe* (ſays he) *dum hæc loquor mutati, mutatus ſum.* Our Bodies (ſays he) are like a River, which keeps nothing but the bare name that was firſt given it; for as touching the preſent individual matter, which is the watry ſubſtance of it, this is always tranſient, and other comes into its room: And ſo it is with the Body of Man, which is always receiving in new Air and Life, and venting the former. Which makes *David* profeſs of himſelf, that he was toſs'd up and down like the Locuſt; and *Job* compares Man for his bodily ſubſtance to a flower that never continues in one ſtay, *Job* 14. 2. For now we are ſtrong, and by and by weak; now beautiful, and preſently deformed. A little Fit of the Feaver, Small Pox, or the like, alters

alters us ſo, as if we were not the ſame men we were before; inſomuch that we hear ſome ſpeaking thus unto us,—— *Hen quantum mutatus ab illo!* Alas, how hath this fit alter'd you from what you were in your health! for how are your lips grown pallid, your cheeks diſcolour'd, your eyes ſunk into their holes, and your face quite diſfigur'd! And others there be of our acquaintance that like *Jobs* three friends do lift up their eyes afar off, and know us not; ſo much are we chang'd in reſpect of our Bodies!

But Secondly, Let us conſider it alſo in reſpect of mens Minds.

And here (to ſay nothing of a moral change, which is obvious every where) as on the one ſide we find nothing more notable *Quinquennio Neronis*, than the firſt five years of *Nero*'s Reign, and more excellent than his Youth: Yet afterwards, having well taſted the ſweet morſel of Soveraignty, he became (ſays one) the moſt deteſtable Tyrant that

ever was: And ſo alſo of *Herod* the Great, *Philo* ſays, that he Reign'd ſix years as a good and juſt Prince, preſenting the *Protaſis* of his Reign with a large Fringe of Goodneſs about it; (as *Joaz*, *Amazias*, and *Ozias* did) but as for the *Cataſtrophe* of it, that was very ſad and fearful. So on the other ſide, we find *Manaſſeh* and *Paul* ſoaking the forepart of their Lives in Blood, being no better at firſt then *Nero* was at the laſt, even a piece of clay temper'd with blood; yet was their end like the end of *Davids* good man, *The end of that man is peace*, Pſal. 37. 37.

But to wave theſe, (whereof much might be ſaid, did it not quite lie out of my road I am now in) and to inſiſt only upon the changeableneſs that doth naturally adhere to the mind of man.

Now tell me, if any thing in the world may be ſaid to be more moveable than the mind of man.

It

It is a Spiritual ſubſtance, and ſo is always moving, (though inſenſibly) from one thing unto another; never reſting, until at laſt like *Noah's* dove it be taken into the Heavenly Ark. S. *Chryſoſtome* therefore compares it to a Bird, which flies in a moment of time over Mountains and Hills, over Seas and Rocks, without any hinderance: for now it is upon the loweſt Shrub, and preſently upon the higheſt branch of the talleſt Cedar; now upon heavenly, and within the twinkling of an eye upon earthly things; now at *Dan*, and in a trice at *Beerſheba*; now at one part of the earth, and then at another: for ſometimes it is ſoaring after *Principalities and Powers, and ſpiritual Wickedneſſes in high places*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks; then after Riches, and by and by after pleaſures; now rejoycing, and then ſorrowing; now quieted, and immediately troubled, and as ſoon pacified again; now hoping, and ſtraightway fearing thoſe hopes; now loving,

and then hating what it loved before. *Sic omnia mutabilitati ſubjacent* (ſays St. *Auguſtine*.) Thus do all things lie down under mutability! And it amaz'd Saint *Bernard* much, to conſider how in the ſame moment of time his mind was not only diverſly, but likewiſe contrarily affected, and as it were pull'd a pieces betwixt love and hatred, joy and ſorrow, fear and hope; having as many varieties of affections within him, as there were diverſities of things in the world for them to light upon.

So that you ſee how the ſeveral Paſſions of our Minds do in a breath, and with the turning of a hand, ſteer divers ways, firſt looking one way, and then another, according as they are wheeled about with the motions of outward Contingencies.

But in the laſt place, we ſhall add unto the former, the great changes that particular men are ſubject to in regard of their outward Eſtates and Fortunes. For the condition of Mortals (ſays a Hea-

Heathen man) hath its turns and returns, both of Proſperity and Adverſity.

That as in a Military skirmiſh there be ſome come up to diſcharge, while others fall off: So is it in the World's *Militia*.

One there is that is rais'd out of the Duſt to ſit among Princes: whereas there is another that is flung down from the pinnacle of worldly joy and proſperity, and ſtated, as *Job* was, upon the Dunghil. And this doth the Preacher tell us, among the reſt of thoſe changes that fell under his obſervation, *That one comes out of Priſon to Reign*, (as Queen *Elizabeth* did out of the Tower to the Throne) *whereas alſo* there is *he that is born in his Kingdom*, and *becomes* very *poor*; (as our *Henry* the Third was, while he lived ſometimes on the Churches Alms.)

God hath appointed us (ſaith one well) all our parts to play, and hath not in their diſtribution been either ſpare-handed to the meaneſt, nor yet partial to the greateſt.

He gave *Caius Marius* at firſt the part of a Carpenters Son, but afterwards the part of one that was ſeven times Conſul. So alſo *Agathocles* the part of a Potters Son at the firſt, but afterwards of the King of *Sicily*.

So alſo on the other ſide, *Darius* play'd the part one while of the greateſt Emperour, and another time of the moſt miſerable Beggar, begging but a little water to quench the drought of Death. And *Bajazet* play'd the Grand Signior in the morning, but in the evening ſtood for *Tamerlains* footſtool.

And *Jane Shore*, *Edward* the Fourths Minion, acts now as Miſtreſs of a ſtately Palace, and a little after dies in a Ditch for want of a Houſe; and (as he ſaid of *Icarus*) ſo may we of her, That—*Nomina fecit aquis*, ſhe gave Name to the place where ſhe died, it being call'd from her *Shore-ditch* to this day.

But I forbear, ſince there is enough recorded for our uſe in the Sacred Scriptures to this purpoſe; where we find an

an example of the one in *David*, who ſays, that God *took him from following the Ewes with young*, and ſet him upon the Throne; there *to feed* (as he ſays) Jacob *his people*, *and* Iſrael *his Inheritance.* And to go lower yet, not only from the ſheepfold, ſo he ſays, *Pſal.* 113. 7. and 8 verſes; *God takes the poor out of the Duſt, and the needy out of the Dunghill, that he may ſet him among Princes, even with the Princes of his people.* Now more vile and contemptible than the Duſt we tread upon, which the leaſt breath of wind commands any way; or than the worſt of duſt, which is that of the Dunghil, we cannot be; yet theſe are they (ſays the Pſalmiſt) whom he ſets among Princes, even with the Princes of his people.

An example of the other we have in *Antiochus*, 2 *Mac.* 9. 9. who was ſo fill'd with Pride through the rankneſs of his Proſperity, that he thought he might command the Sea, (ſo proud was he, ſays the Text, beyond the condition of man)

man) and further, that he could weigh the Mountains in a ballance, and reach up to the ſtars of Heaven: yet by and by is his Comb cut, all his Glory worm-eaten, and none able to endure him for the filthineſs of his ſmell.

Adde to this the example of *Balthazzar*, *Dan.* 5. 5. who was now carouſing in the Conſecrated Veſſels that *Nebuchadnezzar* his Grandfather had plundred the Temple of, and Houſe of God at *Jeruſalem*, as you may ſee, 2 *Kings chap.* laſt. But in the ſame hour (ſays the Text) came out the hand-writing of the wall againſt him, and then was the Kings countenance chang'd, his thoughts troubled, the joynts of his Loyns looſed, and his Kingdom given away to the *Medes* and *Perſians*.

Thus are we for outward things like ſo many Counters, which ſtand one while for a pound, and another for a penny.

That as we ſee commonly in High-ways, where one man hath ſet his foot, ano-

another preſently follows him and treads it out again; ſo is it uſually, That if one man beat out an Honour or Eſtate to himſelf, another comes after and treads out that impreſſion; and whoſe it ſhall be next, there is no man knows. Nay, *Lucan*, *Ipſa vices natura ſubit*---- Even the whole courſe of Nature runs about in a circular motion. Our Bodies, Minds, and outward felicities, whatſoever we are, or whatſoever we have, are all ſubject to change in ſuch wiſe, that we can have no aſſurance of them, no not for a day. We know not what a day may bring forth.

And ſo much for the demonſtration of this truth, *viz.* That there is ſuch a Viciſſitude.

The next thing is the Efficient Cauſes of it. For we never know any thing throughly, (ſays the Philoſopher) until we know the Cauſes of it.

Now in ſpeaking to this, I ſhall proceed, 1. Negatively, 2. Affirmatively.

1. Nega-

1. Negatively, in ſhewing what have been thought to be the cauſes of all Changes and Alterations, yet are not ſo indeed. And here the *Epicures* and vulgar Heathen have thought *Fortune* to be the cauſe of them: And they define it thus to be, *An Event of things without Reaſon.*

But how unreaſonable it is to ſay, That an Event of Things without a Cauſe, ſhould be the Cauſe of all Events, judge ye.

For it was only the ignorance of the true Cauſes, that made the name of *Fortune*; there being nothing fortuitous in it ſelf, but only to us and our ignorance; ſince the power and providence of God hath the ordering and diſpoſing of all things here below. And this did the wiſer ſort among them confeſs, as the Satyriſt tells us.

Nullum numen abeſt ſi ſit prudentia, ſed te
Nos facimus Fortuna Deam----

Others

Others again, as the *Stoicks*, make *Fate* or *Deſtiny* the cauſe of all Alterations, which they ſay is an Event that neceſſarily falls out, from a certain inevitable order and connection of Natural Cauſes, working without the will of God, as the Supreme Orderer and Diſpoſer of them, he being ſubjected to them, and not they to him: whereby they take away the very Nature of the Godhead, which is to be a moſt powerful and free Agent, that works what, and by what means it pleaſes; all ſecondary cauſes depending upon that, and that upon none.

But enough of theſe: For I muſt remember my ſelf, that I am now ſpeaking to *Chriſtians*, who acknowledge the Divine Providence in all things; and therefore ſhall ſpeak no more of theſe Negative and ſuppoſed Cauſes, but ſhall now give you the true Efficicent Cauſes of them, by way of Affirmation.

And

And here know, that *Logicians* tell us of two Efficient Cauſes; Principal, and leſs Principal: And this is twofold, Impulſive, and Inſtrumental.

Firſt then, the Principal Cauſe of all Changes and Alterations is God: for ſo ſaid the Heathen man,

——Valet ima ſummis
Mutare, & inſignem attenuat Deus,
Obſcura promens——

But why borrow I weapons from the *Philiſtins* forge, when as there is enough for this, that may be drawn out of Gods Armory of the Scriptures? as *Pſal.* 75. 6, 7. *Promotion*, ſays the Prophet, *comes neither from the Eaſt, nor from the Weſt, nor from the South; but God is the Judge, he puts down one, and ſets up another.* So alſo *Job* 34. 29. *When he gives Quietneſs, who can make Trouble?* and *when he hides his face, who can behold him; whether it be done* (ſays *Elihu*) *againſt a Nation, or againſt*

a

a particular man only? Again, *Amos* 5.8. *He makes the Seven Stars and* Orion, *and turns the ſhadow of Death into the morning: The Lord is his Name.*

The Oratour expreſſeth this well, by comparing Gods Omnipotency to the power of the Soul over the Members of the Body, which upon the leaſt intimation of the Mind do turn and move about with all facility. Now God (ſays he) is the ſole Mind of the Univerſe, and hath all parts and parcels thereof at his beck and pleaſure, to be turn'd into any ſhape or form at his diſpoſal.

Nay, it is no diſhonour for God to caſt the eye of his Providence upon the alteration even of the meaneſt things: for *who is like*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *to the Lord our God, who hath his dwelling on high, and yet humbles himſelf to behold the things in Heaven and Earth?* Not only to behold the things in Heaven, which is a great condeſcention to him, *whom the Heaven and the Heaven*

of

of Heavens cannot contain; but also the things in Earth. Now how unworthy these are of his taking notice of, you may see by those diminutive expressions of them, compared with Gods greatness, *Isa.* 40. 15. where the Prophet says, *Behold, the Nations are but as the drop of a Bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the Ballance; Behold, he takes up the Isles as a very little thing.* And if this be not low enough for them, he says further, *v.* 17. That *all Nations before him are as nothing, and are counted to him as less than nothing.* Now look what a wide difference there is betwixt the Sea and a Bucket of water, yea the drop of a Bucket; or betwixt a heap of dust, and the small dust of the ballance; betwixt very great and very little; betwixt all things and nothing at all, yea less then nothing, (if less could be:) so vast is the disproportion betwixt God and all Nations, which are the greatest among all earthly things. And yet for all this, is God

God pleaſed ſo far to extenuate his own greatneſs, and to take off from it, as to look after them, and run them about in their ſeveral ſtages from one point unto another.

And if you would have this truth to be made out further unto you, our Saviour doth it, *Mat.* 10. 29. by two ſeveral inſtances.

The one is of two Sparrows, which are little birds and of ſmall value; but the *Greek* yet runs it more diminutively, δύο στρουθία two little ſparrows; and ſo they muſt needs be, for they were ſold both even for a farthing; and this is price little enough. Yet the *Arabick* makes it leſs, and hath for it *Phals*, which is the leaſt piece of money that can be; and accordingly expreſſes the two Mites ſpoken of, *Mark* 12. 42. (which makes but one Farthing) by *Phalſain* in the dual number, as a late and learned Expoſitor notes.

The other is of the Hairs upon our Heads, being a kind of Excrement be-

longing to our Bodies, and no integral or neceſſitous part of them, (as the Heart, Hands, and Feet are;) and yet he tells us, that God numbers theſe, and takes ſuch a particular account of them, that not one of them falls to the ground without his diſpoſal.

In the viſion of the Wheels we read of a wheel within a wheel. Now the wheel within is the wheel of Gods Providence, that turns about the wheels of all outward things, be they never ſo low and mean. For as God doth not labour in doing the greateſt things, ſo neither doth he diſdain, either to do or undo the leaſt; but as he *made the ſmall and great*, (ſays the book of *Wiſdom*) ſo alſo doth he *care for both alike*. The Potter having power over his Clay, either to make of it a veſſel of honour or diſhonour, and being made, either to preſerve it in that form and being he hath beſtowed upon it, or elſe to deform and deſtroy it, ſince it is equitable that every one ſhould do with his

own

own as he pleaſes. Nay, as he ſays of the gnat, that *Nuſquam potentior natura quam in minimis*; So may we ſay, that God doth no ways advance his Power and Wiſdom more, than in ordering of the leaſt accidents to be diſpoſed of to his Glory, and the good of his Children. And ſo much for the *Principal* Efficient cauſe.

The *leſs Principal* follows; which (as I ſaid) is either *Impulſive* or *Inſtrumental.*

Now the *Impulſive* cauſe of all Changes and Alterations is the ſin of man. This uſher'd them in at the firſt, and ſo it doth ſtill. For before *Adam* ſinned, he enjoyed a Paradiſe of conſtant and uninterrupted happineſs: but ſo ſoon as he ſins againſt God, then follows a great change preſently: For the Earth all fruitful before, now becomes barren, himſelf ſubject to labour, his Wife to Travail and Sorrow, and both to cares and troubles, to weakneſs and diſſolution. And ſo it is alſo with Na-

tions and Kingdoms. If they be chang'd at any time, ſin is the cauſe of it; and the greater their ſin is, the greater uſually is their change. Great ſinnings are the floud-gates to let in great Alterations upon them. For it is not a bare ſinning in a Nation, (from which there is none that could ever plead exemption) but a ſinning in ſome high meaſure, that is an in-let to Changes in the higheſt kind. Which made *David* ſay, *Pſal.* 107. 34. That *a fruitful land is turn'd into barrenneſs for the wickedneſs of thoſe that dwell therein*; which the vulgar Latine reads, *Propter malitiam, i. e.* for the *malicious wickedneſs* of thoſe that dwell therein; which notes a ſin of a high nature, *viz.* ſuch a one as is perſiſted in both againſt Knowledge and Conſcience. And therefore it is a good obſervation which *Muſculus* hath upon the words: *Theſe ſtrange Alterations*, ſays he, *of Nations and Kingdoms, are not for the ſinning of them, (from which no Nation can be free) but*

for

for their malicious ſinning. And this you may ſee farther in *Jeruſalem*, Ezek. 21. where we read of a very great Judgment that ſhould befal her from the *Babylonian*, *viz.* Utter Deſtruction, expreſſed by the threefold Overturn wherewith God threatens her, *v.* 27. And *v.* 24. he laies down the Impulſive cauſe that mov'd him to it; and this is an impudent and ſhameleſs ſinning againſt God: for they did not commit their ſin in a corner, as thoſe that were aſham'd of it, but (brazen-faced Wretches as they were) they declar'd their ſin as *Sodom*, and diſcover'd it openly in the face of the Sun: and this they did too, not only in one or two particular acts, but generally, ſays the Text, in all their doings.

Now there is ſome hope of a modeſt and baſhful, but none at all of a ſhameleſs and obdurate ſinner. Thus the Father, when his Son hath done amiſs, yet is he well perſwaded of his amendment, if he but ſee him bluſh upon his

reproving of him. But when like *Judah*, he hath once a Whores forehead, and refuſes to be aſhamed, then doth he give him over as a loſt Child, and not to be recover'd.

So that from hence we ſee, that in what place ſoever we find ſuch a Turn, ſuch an Everſion as this, where all is turn'd upſide down) there hath been without queſtion ſome great *Averſio a Creatore ad Creaturam*, ſome great ſinning againſt God (as the Schoolmen call it.) Which was the reaſon that when the *Engliſh* were (now upon their quitting of *France*, in *Henry* the Sixth's days) demanded of the *French* by way of deriſion, when they would make their return thither; it was feelingly anſwered by one of our Nation thus, *When your ſins are greater than ours.*

It is ſin then that ruines particular perſons, that ſubverts Families, that periods Kingdoms, that wheels about Governments, that overturns States, that diſjoynts Common-weals, and ſays un-

to

to them as to the proud waves, *Thus far ye ſhall go, and no farther.*

And ſo I have done with the Impulſive Cauſe, and come next to the Inſtrumental cauſes or means which God uſes in effecting his Changes here; and they are two.

The firſt is the Motion and Influences of the Celeſtial Bodies.

And this will the better appear, if we conſider their forcible workings upon the Mind of man. For though they cannot work immediately upon it, becauſe it is immaterial; yet may they, and do work mediately upon it, as by the Body, which is the Inſtrument of the Soul to work by, and the Caſe wherein it is put up here for a time; and ſo make it either well or ill affected, according to the Bodies preſent temper. By which means it comes to paſs many times, that not only the diſpoſitions of particular men, but alſo of whole multitudes collected together in a Politick Body, are much alter'd and

chang'd, either to labour or Sloth, to Peace or Diſquiet, to good or evil actings, according as they are inclin'd by the Motions of the Heavenly Bodies.

And that theſe Celeſtial Bodies have their energy upon all Sublunary things, is plain,

Firſt, by Scripture; as *Job* 38. 33. where the Lord ſpeaks thus to *Job*, *Know'ſt thou the Ordinances of Heaven? and canſt thou ſet the dominion thereof in the Earth?* which implies,

1. That the Heavens have power and dominion in the Earth.

2. That this power of theirs is ſet them from Gods ordinance and appointment.

Secondly, by the conſtant Obſervation and Experience of all Ages. *Bodinus* the *French* Lawyer ſpeaks well to this point; *Many erre* (ſays he) *greatly, who think the influence of the Celeſtial Spheres to be nothing, whenas their ſtrength hath ever been moſt effectual, as in Sacred*

Sacred Writ is to be ſeen: and he cites the 38. *chap.* of *Job* before-mentioned to prove the ſame. Adding further, *That many ancient Writers have noted the great Changes in Cities and Kingdoms upon the conjunction of the Superiour Planets, but to them only where they have been deputed of God to that end and purpoſe.* And that they have been inſtrumental towards the working of ſuch effects, he ſhews by an induction of ſome particular inſtances: As, that before the tranſlation of the *Roman* Soveraignty unto *Cæſar*, there was a great Conjunction of the Superiour Planets met together in *Scorpio:* which fell out again ſeven hundred years after, when the *Arabian* Legions received the Law of *Mahomet*, rebell'd againſt the *Greek* Emperours, and ſubdued the Eaſtern *Aſia* from the *Chriſtians*.

The ſame alſo came about again, *Anno Chriſti* 1464. after which *Ladamachus*, King of the *Tartars*, was by his Subjects thruſt out of the Chair of Sove-

Soveraignty; and *Frederick* the Third driven out of *Hungary* by *Matthias Corvinus*, who from a Priſoner ſtept up to the Royal Throne, *&c.*

And *Alſtedius* tells us, that the Conjunction of *Saturn* and *Jupiter* in *February*, 1642. did foretell and portend the revolution of ſome new Empire and Government to fall out after it in *Europe*. The effect whereof in part (it's like) we have ſeen in this Nation already, and may live (if God ſo diſpoſe of us) to ſee further of it yet in time to come.

But to paſs this, and to come to that daily and uſual courſe of Gods proceedings with us in the world. Here methinks there ſhould be few, (though of ordinary capacities among us) but (if we be a little obſerving) may ſee this truth made good by the eye of our own experience, which tells us, that the Earth is either Fruitful or Barren, and the Air either Wholſome or Infectious, ſutably to that meaſure and manner of influence they receive from them. And

And therefore when God will at any time bring about ſome great change in the world, it is then eaſie to ſee how uſually he fits his inferiour means, according to their ſeveral natures, for the orderly tranſacting of it in thoſe ſtations wherein he hath ſet them. As, when he will turn a fruitful Land into barrenneſs, and again, a barren Land into fruitfulneſs, (which he promis'd his own people, *Hoſ.* 2. 21.) there he tells them in what order he will work it: *I will hear* (ſays he) *the Heavens, and they ſhall hear the Earth, and they ſhall hear* Jezreel. For this is a ſure rule, That the Supreme Cauſe of all doth not take away the natures and workings of Secondary Cauſes, but rather eſtabliſh them: which is the reaſon of that Speech of God to *Job*, in the ordinary revolution of the times and ſeaſons of the year, *Job* 38. 31. *Canſt thou bind the ſweet influences of the* Pleiades, *and looſe the bonds of* Orion?

Now

Now the *Pleiades* are thoſe we commonly call the Seven Stars, that have their influence on the earth, by producing ſweet ſhowres to the opening and refreſhing of it, about the Spring of the year; and *Orion* is a Conſtellation moſt conſpicuous in the Winter-ſeaſon, as having a commiſſionary power to bind up the earth with Froſts. Again, *canſt thou bring forth* Mazzaroth *in his ſeaſon*, (*i.e.* the twelve Signes ſucceſſively after one another) *or guide* Arcturus *with his Sons?* (*i. e.* the Polar Star, as ſome will have it, with thoſe *ignes minores* that wait upon him; or *Bootes*, as others.) It is not then ſo much the Earth, as the Heavens that give us either fruit, or withhold it; they being the firſt ordinary means, whereby God uſes to work out alterations in ſublunary things.

The ſecond Inſtrumental cauſe of theſe ſtrange Viciſſitudes here below, is the Will of Man: for though it have not a liberty to Spiritual, yet all grant it

it a liberty to external acts, and moral goodneſs. And this Liberty of Mans Will, doth God uſe as an under-wheel to turn about moſt of thoſe Alterations that are in the world.

It is true, that Health and Sickneſs, Peace and War, Plenty and Scarcity, Riches and Poverty, proceed from God as the principal Efficient cauſe; but yet for all this we deny not but that God makes uſe both of our ſelves and others, as to the means of bringing them about. The life of *Joſeph* was checquer'd with variety of accidents: for he is now a Slave to the *Iſmaelites*, and by and by a Prince in *Ægypt*. Now theſe although they proceeded from God as the Author, yet was the will of his Brethren, as the will of *Reuben* and *Judah*, the inſtruments of preſerving his life, and the wills of his other Brethren the means of ſelling him into *Ægypt*.

Now becauſe it is the Nature of Inſtruments to be ſubſervient to the principal Agent, and to be determin'd by it;

it; therefore give me leave here by the way to faſten this exhortation upon you, That in all Changes whatſoever you will look beyond the Inſtruments of them, unto God the Principal Agent. For ſo did *Job* in his loſſes, beyond the plundring *Chaldeans* and *Sabeans*, unto *Dominus abſtulit, The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken away*; looking upon them as we uſe to do upon an *Index, tantum in ordine ad Librum*, only in order to the Book it ſelf, *Et in tranſitu ad Deum*, in his paſſage unto God, who ſets them awork, as to their natural powers and faculties, though to the evil of them no otherwiſe, than by ordering and over-ruling it to the good of his Children. And hence it is, that the wicked are called Gods Sword, as in the 17 *Pſalm, v.* 13. *Deliver my Soul* (ſays *David*) *from the wicked which is thy Sword.* And ſo muſt we in all thoſe Loſſes that befal us here, have in our eye not ſo much the Sword, as the Hand that holds it: which will be one means, and

and a good one too, to bring us to *Davids* calm temper in the 39 *Pſal.* 19. who ſays in the like condition, *That he was dumb, and did not open his mouth*, nor let fall an impatient word in it, becauſe it was Gods doing: And therefore when *Abiſhai* would have taken away *Shimei*'s life for curſing of *David*, No, (ſays he) *Let him alone, Juſſit enim Dominus, for the Lord hath bidden him curſe; who then ſhall ſay, Wherefore haſt thou done ſo? q. d.* Who then dare expoſtulate with God, or call him to account about it, as if he were unrighteous in it; ſince evil men are but Swords in Gods hand, who, when he hath once done his work by them, will either put them up again into his Scabbard, and lay them by, or elſe ſo blunt the edge of their power, that it ſhall not cut, or elſe break them apieces, and throw them quite away? And ſo much for the Efficient Cauſes of Viciſſitudes.

Next

Next I ſhall ſpeak to the Ends, or Final Cauſes of them.

And theſe are either *Ex parte Dei*, or *Noſtri*; in reſpect of God, or our ſelves.

Firſt, in reſpect of God; and ſo the Principal End why God rings ſuch Changes upon all earthly things, and will have them diſpoſed of after ſo various a manner, is to make them by it the more tunable to his own Glory, which by this means is exceedingly magnifyed and advanced: but eſpecially in the Attributes of his Power, Truth, Wiſdom, and Goodneſs.

1. In his Power and Omnipotency: that ſo he may let the world know, that the Finger of his Power is in all Tranſactions; and that he can do whatſoever he will, both in Heaven and Earth, and yet changes not.

For why elſe did God work ſo many miraculous Changes in *Ægypt* by the hand of *Moſes*?

Why

Why turned he *Moſes* Rod into a Serpent, and the *Ægyptian* waters into Blood?

Why their Duſt into Lice and Flies, and their Light into Darkneſs for the ſpace of three days together?

Why elſe Created he a new generation of Frogs and Locuſts among them?

Why unheard-of Diſeaſes upon themſelves, and upon their Cattel?

Why deſtroyed he their Herbs and Fruit-trees with Hail, and their firſt-born with untimely death?

In a word, Why cauſed he the Red-ſea to go out of its natural courſe and chanel, whereby it became a wall to the *Iſraelites*; and a grave to the *Ægyptians*?

Did not God all this to make known the glory of his power, in the preſervation of the one and, deſtruction of the other? Yes; *For this cauſe* (ſays God to *Moſes*) *I have raiſed thee up, to ſhew in thee my power, and that my Name may be declared in all the earth.*

2. He advances also his Glory this way, by manifesting his Truth and Faithfulness: in that those things which are accidental in regard of us, and seem as impossible, yet are they exactly brought to pass in their due times and seasons. As in the bringing of the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*, wherein God was full as good as his word, and kept touch with them to a day in their Deliverance, as you may see, *Exod.* 12. 41. where we read, *That it came to pass in the end of four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out of the land of* Egypt. All *Pharaoh*'s oppositions and tergiversations could not prorogue their Bondage so much as one day beyond the time prefixed of God, but serv'd only to fill up that *Interim*, or void space of time betwixt Gods Promise made to *Abraham* and his performance of it.

And if you ask by what intervals of time the truth of this promise came about

bout ſo punctually, Divines will tell you, That from *Abraham*'s receiving of the promiſe, unto the birth of *Iſaac*, were five and twenty years; ſixty from thence to *Jacobs* birth; and to his death (which fell out preſently upon their entrance into *Ægypt*) a hundred and thirty years. After which unto the death of *Levi*, who was *Ultimus Patriarcharum*, the laſt of the Patriarchs that ſurvived, and in which ſpace the *Iſraelites* were kindly entreated for *Joſeph*'s ſake, were ninety four years; and a hundred and one and twenty more of cruel Bondage, until *Moſes* came to deliver them from it in the Reign of *Pharaoh Genebes*.

All which particulars being gathered up together, do make up the compleat ſum of four hundred and thirty years, and may ſerve to juſtifie God in all his ſayings, and to clear his Truth in the leaſt circumſtance and punctilio of time, when it ſhall come to be judged.

For when once Gods appointed time is come to introduce a change, either for better or worſe, among any people, then ſhall every breath of wind, how croſs ſoever it ſeems to blow at the preſent, yet be ſo far from hindring Gods work in it, as that one way or other you ſhall find it in the ſequel, to contribute its help and aſſiſtance to it.

3. God advances alſo his Glory this way, in the manifeſtation of his Wiſdom and Goodneſs; in that he makes a ſweet harmony of ſo many different cords and changes, and frames a moſt admirable Order out of a ſeeming Diſorder and Confuſion.

Many and divers are the qualities of Herbs, yet if a skilful Simpler hath the mixing of them, he knows how to make of them a well-reliſh'd and wholſome Sallade: So, many were the interchangeable paſſages that happen'd to *Joſeph*; and had we the ſame, it may be we ſhould think them very confuſed ones; but yet let the Wiſdom and Good-

Goodneſs of God but lay them together, and we ſhall preſently find, as *Joſeph* did, the cloſe of them all in a ſweet *Diapaſon.*

For though all things, as to us, are floating up and down, to and again, by chance as it were and accident; Τῇ τάξει δὲ τῆς προνοίας πάγια καὶ ἀκίνητα, κἂν δι' ἀπὸ τῶν ἐναντίων ὁδεύῃ, ſays *Gregory Nazianzen*; yet if we look to the order and appointment of Gods Providence, (which doth always moſt wiſely contrive all events for the good of his Children) they are fixt and ſtable, howbeit they may ſeem to go contrary at the preſent.

And of Gods dealing in this kind we have *Job* an eminent example; who is to day the greateſt man for Wealth and Honour in all the Eaſt, (and a Tablet of this his Greatneſs you may ſee in his 29 Chapter, which I deſire you to read over at your leiſure) wherein you ſhall find a whole *ſeries* of worldly proſperity to wait upon him;) yet to morrow he is poor, even to a by-word

and proverb, *As poor as* Job: insomuch as he spends all the next Chapter in bemoaning his suddain change, beginning it with a *But*; which though a small Monosyllable, yet as the Helm of a Ship turns about the Vessel any way, so doth this *But* turn about *Job*, and all his former Honour and Prosperity, into the extremest contempt and adversity. *But now*, says he, *they that are younger than I have me in derision, whose fathers I would have disdained to have set with the dogs of my Flock*; and ending it with this doleful accent, verse last, *versa est cithara mea in luctum, & organum in vocem flentium*; *My harp is turned into mourning, and my organ into the voice of those that weep.*

Yet all is well (we say) that ends well; and so it was with *Job*, which makes Saint *James* say, by way of support unto Gods people in their afflictions, *Ye have heard of the patience of* Job, *and have seen the end of the Lord*; *i. e.*

what

what good end God gave him in it; for the next day God brings a great deal of Light out of this Darkneſs, by a wiſe and gracious diſpoſing of all that evil to him for the beſt, in giving him twice as much as he had at the firſt, and bleſſing his later end more than his beginning.

So that although for a time all thoſe ſad Changes that befell *Job*, ſeem'd even to croſs the ordinary courſe of Gods care and Providence to him; yet in the concluſion you ſee how his Wiſdom and Goodneſs cut them all out, and made them ſerve to his greater Honour and Abundance.

And ſo much for the Ends or Final Cauſes in reſpect of God.

They follow now in reſpect of our ſelves.

And theſe are two: firſt to confirm our Faith; ſecondly to reform our Lives, and to work out by them good to his ſervants.

First, to confirm our Faith.

And ſo God brings many times great Changes into the world, to try, if amidſt thoſe ſhakings of outward things among us, we will be ſhaken in our Faith, or not. That as the Apoſtle ſpeaks of Hereſies, 1 *Cor.* 11.19. *Oportet eſſe Hæreſes*, *There muſt be Hereſies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifeſt*; ſo ſay I, *Oportet eſſe mutationes*, There muſt be Changes: and theſe not ſo much in reſpect of the things themſelves, which are in their own natures liable to alteration and diſſolution; as in reſpect of Gods end in it, that they which are approved and ſincere in the Faith, may be manifeſted to be ſo, by their conſtancy and perſeverance in it. That as there is a neceſſity of Fire to try Gold, whether it be true or elſe counterfeit; ſo alſo is there a neceſſity of Changes: for by theſe it will appear, whether we will meaſure our Religion by outward things, and in the loſs or enjoyment of them

be

he loſt in our Proteſtant Faith, yea or no?

There is nothing, Beloved, more diſcovers the Hypocrite than his *Ingenium verſatile*, (as *Livy* ſaid of *Cato*) than his turning humour in Religion: for which I do not ſay he ſhall be plagued in Hell, by being wheel'd about there continually without any relaxation, (though that may ſeem a puniſhment ſomewhat ſuitable to his Weathercock-diſpoſition here upon earth;) no, *Hoc nimis Ethnicum*, This is too heatheniſh: but rather with the Prophet *David*, That *he ſhall turn into Hell with all thoſe that forget God*, which is that portion of Hypocrites mentioned by our Saviour, *Matth.* 24. laſt.

For if an Apple be rotten at the coare, it will not hold long upon the Tree, but upon the leaſt Wind will fall from it. And ſo it is with the rotten-hearted Hypocrite; if a little croſs wind do but blow upon him, oh how ſoon doth he fall off from the Tree of Life,

Life, and become a wind-fall in his Religion, for the Devil that old Serpent to prey upon!

Every Cock-boat (you know) will bear up well enough in a calm ſea: but that is a ſtout Veſſel that can live in the moſt troubled water. And too too many there were in the Primitive times, that like *Dr. Pendleton* in Queen *Maries* days, boaſted much of their Conſtancy in the Orthodox Faith during *Conſtantines* days; ſo long as God hedg'd about his Vineyard with Peace and Proſperity; but ſo ſoon as that Hedge was broken down, and erroneous, yea Heretical Doctrines were let in like ſo many Beaſts of prey to devour, then how quickly did theſe prove Turncoats, and Apoſtates from the Faith!

But as for the true Chriſtian, he is like a Rock,——*Medris imminens in undis*; That although the waves are always ſwelling againſt him, yet is he the ſame man ſtill in his Reformed Religion, and wavers not: or elſe like that Houſe built

built upon the Rock, againſt which the Floods came, and the Winds blew, but it fell not, becauſe it was built upon a Rock.

And ſuch a well-built houſe was St. *Baſil*, who being threatned with death by *Valens*, if he would not adviſe further and turn *Arrian*, anſwer'd with this brave reſolution, *I need not any further advice than I have taken already about this matter; for to morrow I ſhall be the ſame man that I am to day therein, and no other.*

And here know that ſome things are of Neceſſity, wherein we cannot but change, as in natural, civil, and moral things; and to change in theſe is only humane.

Others again are of Duty: and theſe either prohibited, or enjoyn'd.

1. Prohibited, as in evil and erroneous things: and to change here is pious and divine; and not to change, either Weakneſs or Obſtinacy.

2. En-

2. Enjoyn'd, as in ſacred and religious: and to change here is impious and Diabolical; and not to change, true Chriſtian Fortitude and Conſtancy.

Whatſoever things we ſee then wheeling about in the world, as Governments, Families and the like; nay, howſoever we may change our ſelves or be chang'd in ſome things of an indifferent nature, by thoſe that have dominion over our Bodies and Eſtates; yet is there no man that hath dominion over our Faith: But this is Gods peculiar, and therefore in this we muſt not change.

It is not with ſaving Truths as it is with Clothes, which alter every year as the faſhion doth: for *the faſhion of the world paſſes away* (ſays St. *John*;) but true Religion is ever in faſhion with good men, and alters not.

And herein we may juſtly take occaſion to bewail the unſteadineſs of ſome in theſe times, who are mere *Scepticks* in Religion, always conceiving ſome new

new Opinions in it, and always in pain till they be deliver'd of their new conceptions, though never ſo *monſtrous* and *deformed.*

That which was truth with them yeſterday, is no ſuch thing to day; and what is ſo to day, is otherwiſe to morrow; ſuch Changelings there be in this laſt Age, who like the Moon do never appear the ſame two days together! *And I would to God*, (ſays St. *Ambroſe*,) *that their change were no worſe than that of the Moon; for ſhe returns again within a little time to her full light, but theſe never.*

And he is blind that ſees not this among us, (namely) how ſome turn every day to *Popiſh* Superſtition, but more to *Anabaptiſtical* Fancies; ſome unto *Socinian* Blaſphemies, but moſt unto *Atheiſtical* Notions, and all into Senſuality; this being the common Sewer into which all the former run, and are ultimately reſolved.

But as St. *Paul* ſaid to his *Galathians*,

ſo

ſo do I to ſuch. *O fooliſh Galathians, who hath bewitch'd you, that you ſhould not obey the Goſpel?* And it is a metaphor, ſays one, from Sorcerers, who uſe to caſt a miſt before the peoples eyes, that ſo they may not take a right view of what is preſented to them: As if he had ſaid, Who hath caſt a miſt before the eyes of your underſtandings, to make that appear unto you for truth which indeed is not? What? *Are ye ſo fooliſh, that having begun in the Spirit, ye will be perfected in the Fleſh?* So, Are ye ſo fooliſh, that having begun in truth, ye will end in falſhood? or can ye be ſo ſimple, as to exchange Gold for Dirt, Wheat for Chaff, and your pretious Faith, as St. *Peter* calls it, which is the ſubſtance of things hoped for, for Errours of all ſorts, and mere ſhadows of Truth? I trow not. For if Errour (as our *Kingly Divine* ſaid well) have any advantage, it conſiſts in Novelty: or if Truth any, it conſiſts in Conſtancy.

Was

Was the Doctrine then of the Reformed Churches, and the Harmony of our Confessions grounded upon evident and pregnant Scriptures, maintain'd by the Orthodox and Primitive Fathers, and conveyed to us by the constant tradition of the Universal Church, the Faith of Christ once deliver'd to the Saints, and the Truth of God yesterday? why, so it is to day, and will be to morrow also. And therefore to day in our profession of it, we must be as yesterday, and to morrow as this day: because as God is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever; so also is the Truth of God, That which was once so, will be so always, and cannot be otherwise.

Oh that we would then be exhorted in the *Apostles* words, To *stand fast in the Faith, to quit our selves like men, and be strong: and not to be as children, tost'd to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine; but to be in them in understanding, stedfast and im-*

move-

moveable; that ſo God may have cauſe to glory on our behalf; as he did on *Jobs*; *Haſt thou conſider'd* (ſays God to Satan) *my ſervant* Job? So, haſt thou conſider'd ſuch a ſervant of mine? Seeſt thou to how many changes I have ſubjected him? to changes in his Children, to changes in his Eſtate, to changes in his Liberty, to changes in his Friends and Acquaintance? Nay, ſeeſt thou how many of his Brethren are chang'd of late, from a febriſh diſtemper before, now into a ſleepy Lethargy? Seeſt thou how indifferent they are for their Religion round about him, and how many ſhaken reeds there are on every ſide of him? And yet for all this, as my ſervant *Job* did, ſo doth he ſtill hold his integrity. But enough of this.

Secondly, Gods end alſo in it is, To reform our Lives, and do us good by his ſo various diſpenſations towards us Hence we read, *Iſa.* 30. 28. of a ſieve of vanity, wherein God ſays, he will ſift

ſift the Nations, and ſhake them to and fro one after another, that ſo he may winnow them from that chaff of ſin that is within them. For why was *Moab at eaſe from his youth?* why *ſetled he upon his lees*, and held ſtill his *corrupt taſt?* but becauſe he was never diſquieted, nor *emptied from veſſel to veſſel, Jer.* 48. 11. Thus a ſedentary life we find very ſubject to Diſeaſes; and a long ſtanding Proſperity to a Nation, is like a ſtanding Pool, whoſe water doth ſoon puddle and putrifie. And this is the reaſon of that ſpeech of *David, Pſal.* 55. 19. *Becauſe they have no Changes therefore they fear not God*; making by it the uncheckt proſperity of worldly men, a great occaſion of their continuance in ſin, and ſo an *Index* of Gods Wrath upon them, rather than of his ſpecial Favour to them.

And therefore now we have ſeen the Angel of God moving the waters of this Church and State by Inteſtine War, new Opinions in Religion, by Sects, di-

viſions, and the like; it will be good for us to meditate, how God hereby intends to purge us from that ſinful filth that adheres to us, as our diſreſpect to Gods Miniſters, and contempt of his Word, our Cruelty and Oppreſſion, our Pride and Security, our Worldly-mindedneſs, and Hypocriſie.

Indeed men, who are the inſtruments of them, may have other ends in ſuch Alterations, as to wreak their own ſpleen upon their Adverſaries, to unhorſe others, and get themſelves into the Saddle either of Profit or Preferment; (That as *Demetrius* the Silverſmith ſaid, *We get our gains by this means*; ſo ſay they, We get our Honours and Eſtates by theſe means, for if the waters had not been troubled, we had catch'd nothing:) or elſe to ſatisfie their own corrupt wills and pleaſures; as the Author to the *Hebrews* ſays of earthly parents, That they chaſten their children after their own pleaſure, but God who is the Supreme Agent, he doth it for

for our profit, and not his own; there being no ends of gold and ſilver, no mere will or revenge in his end, but only our profit, and to take away the droſs from the ſilver, that ſo he may bring forth (to uſe *Solomon's* expreſſion) a *Vas electum* a choſen Veſſel, as St. *Paul* was, and fit for the Finer.

Thus the Scripture tells us of *Joſeph*, how he was paſs'd over from his brethren to the *Iſmaelites*, and from them to *Potiphar*; and his Brethren had one end in it, but God another: for they did it for evil againſt him, (as he tells them himſelf) and to get twenty Pieces by the ſale of him; but as for God, he meant it to him for good, and to ſave much people alive.

And ſo alſo was Chriſt the Antitype of *Joſeph*, thruſt (as we ſay) from poſt to pillar, *viz.* from *Judas* to *Caiaphas*, from him to *Pilate*, from *Pilate* to *Herod*, from *Herod* back again to *Pilate*, and then into the hands of the clamorous and unreaſonable multitude to be

fied; and *Judas* had one end in Chriſts death, but God another. The end of *Judas* in it was to ſilver his bag with thirty pieces, but Gods end was to ſatisfie his own Juſtice, and to ſave Mankind by it.

So that let mens ſinful ends in theſe Changes and Alterations be what they will, yet is Gods end in it the gaining of glory to himſelf, by his taking away that ſin and corruption which he ſees contracted in us by a long ſtanding ſecurity. And if theſe changes of his be not as a gentle fire to purifie us, they ſhall be as a conſuming fire to deſtoy us.

And ſo much for the Efficient and Final cauſes of Viciſſitudes.

The *Uſes* follow; and they are three.

Firſt, To take us off from our greedy deſire of worldly things.

Secondly, To unpride us in a proſperus condition.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, To comfort and ſupport us in an afflicted one.

And to this purpoſe there is a good ſaying of *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*, the beſt of all the Heathen Emperours, which is this:

Meditate (ſays he) *with thy ſelf how ſwiftly all things that ſubſiſt are carried away: for both the ſubſtances themſelves are in a continual flux, and all actions in a perpetual change; yea the cauſes of them alſo, ſubject to a thouſand alterations, neither is there any thing that can be ſaid to be ſetled or at a ſtand.*

And from hence he draws this inference: *Art thou not then unwiſe, who for theſe things art either diſtracted with cares, puffed up too much with pride, or dejected with troubles?*

And it may put many of us Chriſtians to the bluſh, who ſeldom make ſo good uſe of it as this Heathen did, though we have a far clearer light than he had to guide us to it.

First then, the conſideration of this point, *viz.* The great Viciſſitude and Inconſtancy of all earthly things, may ſerve to wean our hearts from the pleaſing teat of this world, and to raiſe them up to that place where only fixed good is found.

Here we are all too apt with the rich fool to ſet down our reſts, when (God knows) we have little or no cauſe ſo to do. *Neſcis enim, ah neſcis ſervus quid veſper ferat*; Since we do not know what the midwifery of this evening, nay leſs, of this hour or moment may help to bring forth.

It may be a change of our Eſtates into Beggery, by Fire, Thieves, and the like; or elſe of our Liberty into Thraldome, or of our Health into Sickneſs; all theſe ſucceſſively wheeling about, until at laſt our great change come from Life to Death, and ſwallow up the reſt, as the ſea doth the waters that fall into it.

Alas!

Alas! here we are ſubject to a thouſand caſualties; but in Heaven, there, there we ſhall meet with no ſuch alterations; for that is a Kingdom that cannot be ſhaken as earthly Kingdoms are, either by War, Factions, all-eating time, or the like. No, but there is Peace without War, Quiet without Trouble, Freedom without Thraldome, Day without Night, Health without Sickneſs, and Life without Death: whereas here it is far otherwiſe; for God takes away one it may be, with a Feaver, another with the Sword, as Saint *Auguſtine* reckons them up. Nay, *he cuts off the ſpirits of Princes* (ſays the *Pſalmiſt*:) which *Junius* and *Tremelius* Tranſlate by *Vindemiat*, *i.e.* he ſlips them off as a Vintager doth a Bunch of Grapes from a Tree, it is ſo quickly done. Even the higheſt enterprizes that the greateſt Magnifico's of the earth undertake, God doth but blow upon them a little with the breath of his diſpleaſure, and how ſoon are they blaſted and ſhrink away to nothing!

An example of this we have in *Xerxes*, who went againſt *Greece* with a Million of men, and as many Ships as covered the *Helleſpont*; as if he would have ſubdued the Sea, have put a hook into her jaws, and have led her away in triumph: yet how ſoon was his over-bold pride daſhed in pieces by a hand-ful of Greeks! One and the ſame day ſaw him both happy and miſerable; uſing him as a tender and indulgent Mother in the morning, but in the evening as a cruel and hard Stepdame.

Oh the folly then of thoſe that lye always ſucking at theſe earthly flowers, which are as various in their ſhapes, as ever *Proteus* was, and conſtant in nothing ſave in their inconſtancy!

It was the ſaying of *Maximilian* the Second, That every year of our life was a Climacterical year, and brought with it ſome great change or other.

And if every year be ſo changeable, what fools then are they that joyn land to land, and houſe to houſe, that they may

may dwell alone in the earth! yea what mean great men to pride it ſo much in their *Babels* here below, and out of a greedy deſire of gain to run out of their own Chanels, and to call their Lands by their own names? For they that do thus, declare plainly that they think themſelves to enjoy a ſetled eſtate here on earth, as if they ſhould never ſee a change, or at leaſt did not for the preſent look for in Heaven a better and more enduring ſubſtance, as the Author to the *Hebrews* ſpeaks, *Heb.* 12.34.

And yet as the Prophet *Iſaiah* complains, ſo may we, *Quis credidit auditui noſtro? who hath believed our report?* or to whom is this truth of God revealed? For it is ſtrange to ſee how few among us do believe this, that both in our perſons and eſtates we are ſo changeable.

But *this is their way*, ſays *David*, *this is their fooliſhneſs.*

For how ſoon did *Galba* ſtart aſide from the Empire, *Deguſtans Imperium*, taſt-

taſting it only, as *Jonathan* did the Honey with the end of his Spear! How ſoon was *Haman* chang'd from the Minion of the Court, to be the hang-by of the world!

Again, how ſoon was *Nebuchadnezzar* chang'd, even from a Man to a Beaſt: and *Herod* from the higheſt of Men, to be Meat even for the loweſt of Reptiles?

And the proſperity of *Richard* the Third was ſo ſhort (ſays our incomparable Hiſtorian) that it took end ere himſelf could well look over it.

There is not any thing then that we can call conſtant here on earth; which makes the Authour to the *Hebrews*, ſpeaking of *Abraham*, ſay, That *he looked for a City having foundations*: Upon which one gives us this Note; That the Heavenly City can only be ſaid to have properly a Foundation, whereas thoſe Cities that are on earth, do ſhew plainly by their daily ruines, that they have no ſure foundation to reſt upon.

Oh

Oh let this be a means to take off the wheels of our Affections from their eager purſuit after earthly things, and ſet them upon things above, *where the moth cannot come at them, nor thieves break through to ſteal.* And let us look to that charge of the Apoſtle, 1 *Tim.* 6. 17. *Charge thoſe that are rich in the world, that they truſt not in uncertain Riches*; or rather in Riches which are Uncertainty it ſelf in the abſtract; (for ſo the *Greek* runs it; τῷ ἀδηλότητι *i.e.* in the uncertainty of Riches.) And that we may in no wiſe doubt of this their uncertainty, the Wiſe man prefixes a note of certainty before this uncertainty, *Certainly* (ſays he) *Riches make themſelves wings, and fly away as an Eagle towards Heaven*: as if he ſhould have ſaid, Certainly Riches and all worldly things are as uncertain as a Bird that is upon the wing: and therefore we muſt not *ſet our hearts upon them*; but our daily prayer and practice muſt be, *So to paſs through things temporal, that ſo we*

do

do not looſe thoſe things that are eternal: or elſe with *David*, let us beſeech God to *incline our hearts unto his Teſtimonies, and not to Covetouſneſs.* Now this inclining our hearts unto Gods Teſtimonies, is nothing elſe but that holy and penitential change of Heart and Life, or elſe that turning unto God with all our hearts, which God calls for at our hands, and expects from us in all his changes, whether perſonal or elſe National; which if he find in us, then let what changes ſoever fall, they ſhall all work together for our good: but if not, we muſt then look to be as a rowling ſtone, and to have our daily turns and changes in this life from one degree of miſery to another, until at laſt we turn into Hell, as *David* ſpeaks, *with all thoſe that forget God.*

Secondly, The conſideration of this point may be a good antidote againſt Pride in a proſperous Condition, ſince God hath ſo ordered the Web of our Lives,

Lives, as that Adverſity as well as Proſperity is interwoven in it: For there is nothing that ſwells us up ſo much, as proſpering here in worldly things; and nothing again that is more effectual to aſſwage this ſwelling in us, than to conſider the brevity and mutability it is ſubject to.

Now it ſwells us up with a high opinion either of our own Goodneſs above others, or elſe of our own Greatneſs.

1. Our proſpering in worldly things ſwells us up with a high opinion of our own Goodneſs above others; as

1. It makes us think our ſelves the only good men in Gods eye, becauſe we are proſperous in the worlds; whereas indeed, this can be no certain rule to meaſure out any ſuch thing by, ſince the world and the proſperity of it is ſo variable and uncertain.

And therefore, when at any time God ſhall water us more than others with the lower ſprings of his earthly Bleſſings,

Bleſſings, we are not therefore to have an overweening conceit of our ſelves, and our own cauſes, above others, (as if God upon this ground had tyed his ſpecial love either to us or them:) For you know that when God would chuſe a King for *Iſrael*, he choſe him not by outward and periſhing excellencies, for then he would have choſen in the room of *Saul*, *Eliab*, *Aminadab*, or *Shammah*, who were the three elder brothers of *David*, and men of goodly perſonages to look upon; yet God choſe none of theſe, (ſays the Text) but *David* the youngeſt of them, though not ſo outwardly, yet inwardly glorious, being a man after his own heart.

It is the chief Argument the *Turks* uſe at this day, to prove themſelves the only *Muſſelmen*, or true believers; We thrive (ſay they) and proſper in the world: for how hath our *Mahometaniſm* over-run all *Aſia*, *Affrick*, and the greater part of *Europe* too! And do not

not they among us then reaſon more like *Turks* than *Chriſtians*, who ſpeak after this manner, Come, ſee how we bear down all before us, and ride upon the backs of the poor in triumph! Thus and thus do we proſper in the world, and do even what we liſt; and is not this an evident ſign we are Gods Children, and that the right end of the ſtaff is ours? Sure, if we were other than Gods peculiar people, he would not bleſs us ſo much as he doth.

But to theſe I anſwer, That theſe and ſuch like are only *Bona Scabelli*, (as Divines diſtinguiſh well out of that place of *Iſaiah*) and not *Bona Throni*, the Goods of Gods Footſtool, (but earthen ware) and not the good things of his Throne, which are Grace and Glory; & therefore can ſet upon us only an earthly mark for men here to take notice of us, but not any heavenly cognizance for God to look upon us, as upon his dear and elect Children. For elſe it would eaſily follow, That the *Alchoran* were bet-

better than the *Bible*, and the *Turks* fancie better than our Faith of *Chriſtianity*.

And were there no other ſignal place of Scripture for this, than that of the Prophet *David* in his 73. *Pſalm*, (as indeed there are very many) this alone (methinks) were enough to impreſs this as a truth upon us, where he ſpeaks of ſome that are not in trouble like other men, but pride compaſſeth them about as a chain, violence covers them as a garment, their eyes ſtand out with fatneſs, and they have more than their heart can wiſh; yet theſe (ſays he) *v.* 12. are the ungodly who proſper in the world. And the Prophet *Jeremy* makes bold to queſtion with God about it, in theſe words, *Jer.* 12. 1, 2. *Wherefore*, ſays he, *doth the wicked proſper? and why are all they in wealth that rebelliouſly tranſgreſs?* and he reſts ſatisfied with this, verſe 3. That God did by that proſperity of theirs fatten them as ſheep to the ſlaughter, and prepare them for

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the day of deſtruction. And this is that proſperity of fools that the Wiſe man ſpeaks of, which will deſtroy them, *Prov.* 1. 32.

It is not then our thriving in Temporals, but in Spirituals, that ſpeaks us and our Faith to be accepted of God.

For the truth of Grace or Religion, and the goodneſs of a mans Cauſe, is not meaſured by the Souldiers Sword, but by the Word of God, which is the Sword of the Spirit.

God Saints no man for his goodly Perſonage, for his Riches, for his politick head-piece of contriving, and bringing about his own worldly and ſiniſter ends, or for his Arms and Conqueſts; for then *Saul* and *Crœſus*, *Ahitophel* and *Alexander* the Great had been high in Gods book; but he values Men only by their Spirituals, as their graces of Faith, Humility, Patience, Meekneſs, Obedience, and the like: and where he finds theſe, (how unfurniſhed ſoever they are otherwiſe) yet *theſe are mine*,

ſaith the Lord; and in that day when I ſhall make up my Jewels, I will ſpare them, even as a Father doth his Son; and then ſhall ye diſcern between the righteous and the wicked, betwixt him that feareth God, and him that feareth him not.

Indeed God may ſometimes permit evil to proſper in the world, but never approve of it: for ſo acknowledges the *Jewiſh* Church, *Lament.* 3. 35. *To turn aſide the right of a man before the face of the moſt High, or to ſubvert a man in his cauſe, the Lord approveth it not.* And therefore to argue from Gods permiſſion to his approbation, is a groſs *Non ſequitur*, nay more, a laying our iniquity on Gods back, as if he would take it well at our hands to be made a Packhorſe at every turn to bear all our execrable burdens, and were (as *David* ſpeaks) ſuch a one as our ſelves, to favour evil courſes, or elſe to own them as his off-ſpring.

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Which made *Dionyſius* the elder conclude Sacriledge to be no ſin, when he had rob'd the Temple at *Locri*, becauſe the Gods ſeem'd (as it were) to ſmile upon the action; in giving them fair Winds and Weather, both in their voyage thither and return back again.

But, as it was a great Blaſphemy (ſays one) for the Devil to perſonate God, when he would be *ſimilis Altiſſimo*; ſo is it greater to make God perſonate the Devil. And yet this he doth, that makes God patronize his evil, becauſe he proſpers in it; for this brings in God ſaying, That he will be like the Prince of Darkneſs, and makes the Holy Ghoſt to leave his Dove-like ſhape, and come only to us in the form of a greedy Raven or Vulcur.

2. As our proſpering in worldly things ſwells us up too high with an opinion of our own Goodneſs, and makes us think better of our ſelves than is meet; ſo alſo doth it on the other

ſide liſt us up too far with thoughts of evil towards out brethren, and make us think worſe of them, and the ways of God they walk in, than we ſhould, by charging them as utterly deſerted of God, becauſe we ſee not now the ſame hedge of Gods favour about them as heretofore we did, but the ſtakes that then prop'd them up, are now thrown away as uſeleſs and unſerviceable. Whereas Afflictions on this hand are every way as temporary and tranſient, as Proſperity was on the other; and being ſo, muſt needs be as a broken reed, or a reed of *Egypt*; wherewith we cannot exactly meaſure Gods Temple, nor the Spiritual eſtate of his Children.

It was a hard ſtumbling-block to the Prophet *David* for a time, when he ſays that his *feet were almoſt gone, and his footſteps had well-nigh ſlipt*, upon his ſight of the wickeds proſperity; until he went into the Sanctuary of Gods Word, where he learnt to ſettle his wavering and diſtruſtful thoughts: for there

there he ſaw, that notwithſtanding his outward afflictions, that God held him up under that ſore temptation with his right hand, and would (in oppoſition to tranſitory goods, which are the proper bleſſings of the wicked, becauſe they have no others but theſe to truſt unto) guide him with that which ſhould infinitely exceed them, to wit, his Counſel here, and his Glory hereafter.

And it was the great queſtion ſo much agitated betwixt *Job* and his Friends, Whether thoſe doleful changes that befel him were the cognizance of his inſincerity to God, and of Gods diſfavour to him upon it, yea or no. His Friends taking advantage upon his preſent weakneſs and diſtemper, maintain it ſtrongly againſt him in the affirmative, that they were: until at length God himſelf ſteps in to the reſcue of the weaker ſide, and makes the concluſion (as all Logical concluſions do) to follow the weaker part, determining it for *Job* againſt his Opponents in the

Negative, and telling them, that they ſpake not of *Job*, nor of his proceedings towards him that which was right, *Job* laſt, verſe 7.

Seneca a *Stoick* Philoſopher, hath a ſet diſcourſe to this purpoſe, *Cur bonis viris mala eveniant*, why the evils of this life moſt commonly fall out to good men: and he concludes it thus, That temporal evils are no ſign of Gods hatred to them. For, doſt thou think (ſays he) that the *Lacedemonians* hated their Children, when as they experimented their diſpoſition to virtue by ſtripes in publick? No. So, do we think Gods Children in diſfavour with him, becauſe he lays here ſore blows upon their Bodies and Eſtates by evil men, as his rods and ſcourges in it? No; for we ſee and feel many times (ſays an experimental patient of our own well) the deep lines and ſtrokes of Gods hand upon us, when as we cannot by our skill in Palmeſtry decipher his meaning in it, no more than the

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Malteſes could by the viper upon Saint *Pauls* hand judge of his condition to God-ward.

For God ſometimes (that we may not thus judge) inverts humane order, and runs out his dealings towards us in the ordinary chanel of his univerſal Providence, Juſtice and Equity, by which he waters here all alike.

Indeed they may ſeem (I grant) to go counter to our apprehended rules of common right: yet are they always agreeing both with Gods ſecret and revealed will, though (like the Sun in its ſphere) not perceptible to us, becauſe too myſterious and dazzling: however, many pretend to interpret them by a blaze of fire lighted at the natural pride of their own private ſpirits, and that dimme twilight of knowledge which is in them; whenas they are altogether in the dark to the true light of Gods word and works herein.

And here take in the opinion alſo of *Epictetus* another *Stoick* and Heathen

man, which ſpeaks moſt Chriſtianly to this point, namely, That all are not hated of God, who do wraſtle here with variety of Miſeries: but that there are with God good cauſes of it, though ſo ſecret that few can reach them.

And therefore, albeit we cannot ſee how theſe actings of God may ſtand with his tender love to his children, and ſo may conceive an ill opinion of them; yet when we ſhall think ſeriouſly, that Gods thoughts and ways are not as ours, it will teach us to give them a more favourable interpretation.

For how dare humane raſhneſs (ſays Saint *Bernard*) reprehend that which it cannot comprehend; in giving demonſtrative reaſon why worldly proſperity ſhould be Virtues ſtepdame, and not her natural mother!

But (to cloſe up this Diſcourſe) you ſee here by what hath been ſaid, that it is a great errour (howbeit now grown more than popular) to judge of perſons

ſons and cauſes by the events, whenas *all* outward *things* (ſays *Solomon*) *fall alike to all, neither can any judge of love or hatred by what is before him:* Proſperity and Adverſity being but ſeparable accidents to them, and no eſſential properties of them, becauſe they are grounded upon worldly things, that have ſo looſe and mouldring a foundation, as that a man cannot tell concerning them what a day may bring forth. Again,

2. As worldly proſperity ſwells us up with a high opinion of our own Goodneſs above others, ſo likewiſe of our own Greatneſs. And this makes us ſlight thoſe that are under us, and deal hardly with them, (as to temporal things) which we would not do, if we once conſider'd the mutability of it.

And therefore if at any time God ſhall give up unto us thoſe we conceit our enemies, to be dealt with (if we will) by all harſhneſs and extremity; yet are not we then to trample upon them

them in the pride of our hearts, nor to adde more load to that which God hath already laid upon them; but rather to take off from it what we can, and to use them with all gentleness and compassion, with all mildness and moderation, as considering our selves, that we are not here to live always as Gods upon earth, the same yesterday, to day and for ever: but what is the bitter cup of their portion to day, may be ours to morrow.

It speaks out but a coarse and ignoble spirit, to crow and insult over those that are down. The very Heathen thought it so, who had only the glimmering of Nature to guide them; much more ought we Christians, whom the Apostle exhorts, that our *moderation may be known to all men.* That as the Apostle will have his *Corinthians* to *use the world with a* tanquam, *as if they used it not*; so must they among us, that have wealth, power and authority, so use them, as if they used them not: that

that ſo when they ſhall fail us, (as they will ere long, ſince the wind blows not always out of one and the ſame favourable quarter) we may then be able to ſay with comfort, That we never miſemployed thoſe talents of Gods outward favour to us unto the preſſure and deſtruction of our Brethren, but only to their relief and preſervation.

The Prophet *David* in his Tenth *Pſalm*, ſpeaks of ſome, who *through the pride of their countenance do not ſeek after God, neither is God in all their thoughts.* But *their ways are always grievous; they puff at their enemies, and ſay in their hearts, they ſhall never be moved, nor be in adverſity.*

And ſuch were the *Babylonians*, who (beſides their barbarous cruelty to the *Iſraelites* under captivity) added this above all, that they ſcoffed and jeered at them in their miſeries, with *Sing us now one of the Songs of* Sion. So alſo were the *Edomites*, *v.* 7. who cryed over *Jeruſalem* in the day of her viſitation,

tation, *Raſe it, raſe it even to the foundations.*

And were we ſure that the ſun of our earthly Happineſs would always ſtand ſtill in this our *Gibeon*, it may be we might take liberty to do the like, and think we did well in it too. But when as we come to conſider ſeriouſly, that there is no Solſtice here upon earth, but ſo ſoon as the Sun is come to his furtheſt Summer-point in our Horizon, it is then preſently vertical, and turning again to make winter-weather with us, how will this aſſwage that ſwelling of pride that is within us, and make us humble?

To this purpoſe there is a memorable Hiſtory of *Caganus* King of the *Huns*, unto whom *Theodorus Medicus* being ſent in an Embaſſy from *Mauritius* the Emperour, to divert thoſe ſwarms of people wherewith *Caganus* at that time threatned to ſtorm the Empire, he apply'd himſelf to him in theſe words; *Audi* Cagane, *utilem narrationem* Seſoſtris,

ſtris, &c. Hear, ſays he to *Caganus*, a profitable Narrative of *Seſoſtris* King of *Ægypt*, who being lifted up too high with his great ſucceſſes againſt his enemies, cauſed four Kings taken priſoners to draw his Triumphal Chariot, wherein one of them looked back with ſmiles to the wheel of the Chariot, and being demanded his reaſon for it, anſwered, *That he ſmiled to ſee the ſpoak of the wheel now at the top, to be preſently at the bottom; and again, that which is now at the bottom, to be by and by at the top.* The very hearing whereof did ſo mollifie, and keep down the haughty Princes ſpirit, that it drew him a little to forbear his acts of hoſtility againſt the Emperour.

And from this Topick alſo of volubility, did *Cræſus* draw an argument to diſſwade *Cyrus* from his intended inrode into *Scythia*: for if thou didſt lead (ſays he) an immortal Army, then is there no need for thee to ask my advice in it; but if thou doſt acknowledge thy

thy self a man, and a leader of mortals; then think that there is a wheel of humane affairs that runs about continually, and suffers nothing here below to stand long upon the same bottom.

But this advice of *Crœsus* took no place with *Cyrus*; If it had, he would have kept himself (as the *Tortoise* doth) *intra vestimenta*, within his own shell, within his own dominions, and not have causelesly usurped upon the rightful possessions of others to his own destruction: but see the issue and event of it.

Even that God who is infinite in his Wisdom, and terrible in his Power and Justice, he that resists the proud, and looks upon them afar off; He (I say) made the pride of *Cyrus* serve as a snare to take himself in, and to work his ruine: for he was no sooner entred *Scythia*, but he found by sad experience how unconstant the World was, not looking now upon him with that smiling

smiling aspect it did before; but the wind was now in another quarter, and (as the Wise man says of Riches, that *they make themselves wings and fly away*) so did his former prosperity betake her self now to her wings, and flew away, his whole Army being quite defeated, and himself slain by *Tomyris* Queen of *Scythia.*

A good example to make the secure wretch look about him, and to pull down the high looks of the proud.

And therefore when ever any flashing of pride begins to rise within thee, and to bud forth, as it is in *Ezekiel*, into violence, and oppression of others, then think thou hearest some Monitor calling unto thee, as King *Philips* Page did to him, *Memento te esse mortalem*, remember that thou art Mortal: so, remember that thou art changeable as well as others, and this will be an excellent means to keep it in.

For tell me, would *Cyrus*, think you, have invaded *Scythia*, had he thought so

so sad a fate would have attended him in it?

Or would *Pharaoh* have oppress'd the *Israelites* so much, had he thought that God would have tumbled him up and down so much as he did, from one plague to another, and at last made the sea his champion to revenge their injuries upon him?

Or would *Joseph*'s brethren have persecuted him as they did, if they had thought he should afterwards have been lord over them?

Or the *Gileadites* have expelled *Jephtha*, had they known he would have been such a shelter against a storm, and of such use unto them against the *Ammonites*?

Or (to say no more) would *Darius* have call'd *Alexander Philip*'s boy in derision of him, had he known that he should have been conquered by him?

No, little do proud men think that the water which is now in the float, will presently be in the ebbe; and that

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the ſpoak of the wheel which is now at the top, may quickly be at the bottome: and then he that is the greateſt now among us, may come (how ſoon he knows not) to ſtand in need of the meaneſt creature whom he now deſpiſes.

It is wiſdome then for every Chriſtian, whenas he is at the top of the wheel, and may lord it over thoſe that are beneath, yet not to overlook them with a ſcornful eye, but to let down his ſpirit, and (as the Apoſtle exhorts us) to condeſcend to men of low degree: For one ſcale is not always in depreſſion. No, This were *dura infœlicitas*, a very hard and high meaſure of infelicity. Neither is the other always in elevation: This were *fœlicitas miſeranda*, a happineſs to be pitied. But the alternate wave of the beam keeps them both in awe, and eſpecially the proud perſon, who ſeems unto me as a bird tied to a ſtring, which if it fly too high, the hand draws in the ſtring and pulls it

down again. And ſo if we ſhall let out our ſpirits too high with pride, God hath then a line of viciſſitude in his hand to pull us in at his pleaſure.

The Prophet *David* ſaid in his proſperity, that he ſhould never be moved, his mountain was made ſo ſtrong; yet God did but hide his face from him a little, and he was troubled.

Naturally then we are too apt to know no meaſure in a high fortune; but (as a perſon of Honour and Piety in this Nation ſaid) although in the heat of ſummer we eaſily believe there will come after it a cold ſeaſon of froſt and ſnow, yet are we ſo ſtupid as in Proſperity not to conſider of Adverſity, though the one be as ſucceſſive as the other. And this makes us to exalt our ſelves ſo much above all that is called God. That as it is obſervable touching the Book of *Eſther* (which is nothing elſe but a Declaration of acts done in reference to the Greatneſs, Power and Glory of *Ahaſuerus* the *Perſian* Monarch,

narch, as to the principal inſtrument of them) that in that whole Book the Name of God is not ſo much as mentioned at all: So doth it alſo commonly fall out, that while we are here in the ruff of our worldly Glory and Proſperity, we ſeldom or never ſpeak of God, and as ſeldome think of him, but ſet our ſelves up in his room, as *Nebuchadnezzar* did, who ſpake too big, and too much of himſelf, ſaying, *Is not this great Babel that I have built for the houſe of my Kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majeſty?* As the fly ſaid in the Apologue when it was got up to the top of the wheel, See what a duſt I make! So, ſee what a duſt makes this poor Worm, what a *Mying* there is with him in the height of his pride! nothing but *my* Kingdom, *my* Power, and *my* Majeſty: but as for God, *Negry quidem*, There is not a word of him; He is not in all his thoughts.

And therefore how ſoon the houſe of his Kingdom fell upon his head, yea how ſhort-liv'd the might of his power was, and the honour of his Majeſty, you may ſee by the next verſe, where it is ſaid, That while the word was in the Kings mouth, there fell a voice from Heaven, ſaying, *O* Nebuchadnezzar, *to thee be it ſpoken, Thy Kingdom is departed from thee.*

The world then may well be compared to the Sea of glaſs which Saint *John* ſaw in his viſion, *Revelat.* 4. 6. and there be alſo, that from the reſemblance of the one to the other, interpret it thus. For

First, It reſembles the Sea either for its ebbing and flowing; or elſe for the ſuddain change of it: for how ſoon is the face of the Sea alter'd? in one and the ſame hour (it may be) thou mayſt ſee her ſmiling upon thy veſſel, and frowning too; playing with it, and ſwallowing it up. *Noli igitur* (ſays the Moraliſt) *tranquillitati ejus credere, i. e.*

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Do not therefore truſt too much to her ſmooth and calm looks; *in hoc enim momento mare evertitur*, for in one moment doth ſhe appear wrinkled vvith billovvs, and turns about from a calm unto a ſtorm.

Secondly, It reſembles alſo glaſs, and that either for its brittleneſs, becauſe nothing is ſooner broken: or elſe for its ſlipperineſs, becauſe he that walks upon glaſs can have no ſure footing; and therefore for any man to preſume upon the ſteadineſs of it, muſt needs be very dangerous.

That as the ancient *Romans* uſed to diſtinguiſh their days into *Dies albi*, and *Dies atri*, white and black days: ſo doth God, and there is no man but hath the later of theſe as well as the former, his black as well as his white days.

Oh the madneſs then of wicked men, vvho are alvvays plotting againſt the righteous, and gnaſhing upon them vvith their teeth! *At videbit Deus*, ſays *David*, *But God ſhall laugh at them* for it:

and he gives this reaſon, *v.* 13. *becauſe he ſees that their day is coming*, *i. e.* he ſees clearly that their black and diſmal day is coming upon them, though themſelves will not ſee it through the pride and ſecurity of their ſpirits; yea, and he knows alſo punctually when it will be, though we know it not: for though to day may be fair and ſhining, yet may to morrow be dark and tempeſtuous with them; ſince we know not what a day may bring forth.

Laſt of all, (becauſe I am loath that my Sun ſhould ſet in a cloud) The conſideration of this point may ſerve as a good antidote againſt deſpair in an afflicted condition; or as a cordial to ſtay up our ſpirits in the ſaddeſt and moſt diſtreſſed times, and to teach us patience and contentedneſs in them: that ſo as in proſperity we ſhould not ſay, we ſhall never be moved, ſo neither in adverſity, that we ſhall never be delivered; when we ſhall conſider, that what weight of affliction ſoever we lye under,

under, is not of a continuant, but of a changeable nature. And to this end we have the ſure ſtaff of Gods promiſe unto his children to lean upon, as in the tenth Chapter to the *Hebrews*, where he ſays thus, *Yet a little while*, or rather as it runs in the *Greek*, yet how very very little while, (with a double diminutive) *and he that ſhall come, will come, and will not tarry.* And in the precedent verſe he tells them, they have need of patience, that they may receive this promiſe. And in the twelfth Chapter to the *Hebrews*, the Apoſtle takes up an exhortation to it from the Wiſe man, and makes a conſolatory uſe of it to his *Hebrews*, withal taking them to task for their forgetfulneſs of it; *And ye have forgotten the exhortation which ſpeaks unto you, as unto children: My Son, deſpiſe not thou the chaſtning of the Lord, nor faint*, or be not broken in mind (as others tranſlate it) *when thou art rebuked of him.* For *we had* (ſays he) *the fathers of the fleſh, who verily*

chaſtened us a few days after their own pleaſure, and *we* were patient under their rod, and *gave them reverence, but God* a few days only, *for our profit. Shall we not then be much rather in ſubjection to him who is the father of ſpirits, and live?*

Thus when *Boetius*, that Chriſtian Conſul and Martyr at *Rome*, was wrongfully deprived by *Theodoricus* of his Honours, Eſtate and Liberty, Philoſophy brings in what we call Gods Providence, comforting him in theſe words: I turn about my wheel continually, and delight to tumble things upſide down; why then doth thy heart ſhrink within thee, when as this changeableneſs of mine is cauſe enough for thee to hope for better things?

And ſo alſo, when many of our Brethren were heretofore in Exile for their Religion in Queen *Maries* days, what (I pray) did that *Jewel* of our Church comfort them with, but onely this, *Hæc non durabunt, ætatem*; Theſe will not endure

endure an Age? as indeed you know they did not, her Reign being not full out ſix years time.

And with the ſame conſideration alſo ſhould we chear up our ſelves now under that black cloud that hangs over the Church, that it will not endure an Age, but be as *Ephraim's* righteouſneſs was, even as the morning cloud, or as the early dew that paſſes away.

To this end, it will not be amiſs to note, how the afflictions of Gods people in the Scripture, are run out not by any long tract of time, as by an Age, Year, Month, Week, or the like; but by the ſhorteſt meaſures that can be, as by a Day: now a Day (you know) holds not long, but is quickly gone, even as a flying Bird, or a Poaſt that runneth by. And thus good *Hezekiah* calls the time of *Sennacheribs* rage againſt *Judah*, a Day of trouble, *Iſa.* 37. *v.* 3.

Or if this be not enough, you have them then contracted within a leſſer room, and meaſur'd onely by a Night, which

which is no more but the dark ſide of a natural Day, and therefore is a great deal ſhorter. And this made the Prophet *David* ſay, *Pſal.* 30. *v.* 5. That *heavineſs may endure for a Night, but joy cometh in the Morning.* The time then that heavineſs ſhall endure to the Godly can be but a Night at the longeſt, but whether it ſhall be ſo long or no, the Prophet is very uncertain and unſatisfied, for which cauſe he expreſſes it here with a *May be*, *Heavineſs may endure for a Night.*

But if this expreſſion be not full enough to ſet forth the brevity of them, our *Saviour* doth it then by an Hour, which is ſhorter yet, and but the four and twentieth part of a natural Day; for ſo he calls the time of his perſecution by the High Prieſts and Elders of the people, Their *hour, and the power of Darkneſs*, *Luke* 22. 53.

Or, if this be yet too long a ſpace to ſet forth the brevity of their afflictions, and to give a through Comfort to Gods people,

people, their little continuance is then expreſs'd by a Moment, which I am ſure is ſhort enough; ſo you have it *Iſa.* 54. *v.* 7. *For a ſmall moment* (ſays God to his Church) *have I forſaken thee, but with great mercy will I gather thee:* And again, v. 8. *In a little wrath I hid my Face from thee for a moment, but with everlaſting kindneſs will I have mercy upon thee.*

Or laſt of all, if any time can be ſhorter than this, it muſt then be the preſent time; yet ſuch are the ſufferings of Gods children, in St. *Pauls* account, but *the ſufferings of the preſent time*, Rom. 8. 18. and a ſhorter time than this there cannot be. For as the *French* our Neighbours are ſaid to be for their inconſiderateneſs, *Animalia ſine præterito & futuro*, Creatures that have reſpect neither to time paſt nor time to come: ſo may we ſay of the preſent time, That it is as ſhort a meaſure as can poſſibly be imagined, having in it nothing either of time paſt

or

or future, the first of the two being dead already, and the later of them being not yet born unto us. And yet we see here for all this, that St. *Paul*, when he had cast up the account of all which he suffered in the cause of Christ, how he reckons and concludes it to be onely the suffering of the present time, and not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed.

A Prayer.

ALmighty God, who ruleſt the Sea *of this World by thy power, and whoſe paths are in the roughest* Waters; *We the unworthieſt of all thy Servants commit our frail* Barks, *with all that we have, to the* Steerage *of thee our great* Pilot, *and faithful Preſerver: beſeeching thee ſo to order by thy good hand of Providence all outward contingencies to us, that we may be able to* bear up *through them with a ſteady and even* Courſe, *againſt the ſeveral* Storms *we ſhall meet with in this* paſſage *to our bleſſed* Harbour *of Eternity. And however earthly things may like* Watery Billows *be every day* rowling up *and* down *in their viciſſitudes about us; yet ſuffer, oh ſuffer not the Heavenly truth of our Reformed Religion to* flote *about any longer ſo uncertainly among us, nor*

nor our ſelves to be as Children toſs'd to and fro with every Wind of Doctrine. But let us be conſtant and unwavering in the profeſſion of this Holy Faith we have received; and (Thou that art the God of Truth) be graciouſly pleaſed to ſtay us up ſtrongly in it by the ſacred Scriptures, which are thy Word of Truth, and the ſole Anchor of our Faith to reſt upon. Lord, pull in the Sails of our deſires towards fleeting and tranſitory ſubſtances: for who will caſt his eyes upon that which hath wings to flee away as an Eagle towards Heaven? Ballaſt our Spirits with Humility in a proſperous condition; and when we have the higheſt and moſt pleaſing Gale of the worlds favour for us, give us to ſtrike our ſpreading Sails of Pride, and to make our Lenity and Moderation to be known to all men, for the [illegible] is nigh at hand. But if thou in [illegible] judgment againſt us for our manifold grievous ſins, ſhalt cauſe ſome [illegible] ſtorm to blow upon us, and [illegible] Shipwrack in our temporals;

rals; Supply then, we entreat thee, their want with thy ſpirituals of Patience, Faith, and other ſuffering graces; That although the tempeſt *be never ſo* boiſterous *without, yet we may enjoy within a Chriſtian* calmneſs *of Spirit, in a happy quietude and contentedneſs of mind with all thy dealings towards us, and not ſet down our reſt upon the Creature, which is ſo reſtleſs with us, but amidſt the ſundry and various changes of the world, may there fix our Hearts, where onely true and unchangeable joys are to be found, through* Jeſus Chriſt *our Lord.*

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